



## **MEDIA RELEASE**

### **BOHNETT PARK MURAL AND BASKETBALL DEDICATION**

### **THURSDAY, AUGUST 23**

**SANTA BARBARA, CA – August 17, 2012**

A ribbon cutting ceremony to honor both the completion of five mural paintings and renovated basketball and handball courts at Bohnett Park, 602 W. Anapamu Street, is scheduled for Thursday, August 23, at 11am. Public and press are invited to attend and celebrate these projects that both enhance the park and the quality of life in the Westside neighborhood.

The five murals at Bohnett Park are the most recent of the 22 murals painted in four City parks over the last seven years by the Santa Barbara Arts Alliance, a youth program led by the City's Parks and Recreation Department. The mural project helped to focus attention on the need to revitalize the Westside neighborhood. The City of Santa Barbara has been making a concerted effort to reach out to neighborhood residents and families, in order to demonstrate a new level of commitment towards improving their quality of life.

The Bohnett Park mural project started in May of this year and was completed this month. "Rise Above" is an 80-foot long mural depicting local and national sports figures who have been inspirational to the youth living in the neighborhood. It is a vibrant piece of art work that uses a variety of colors and images of realism. The four murals on the restroom walls were completed this past March and depict Mayan Ball players, people representing different cultures and women in sports. Three large panels created in 2011 located in the back patio area of Boys Club depict sports heroes and children at play in outdoor settings.

The project was directed by Annette and Manuel Unzueta. The father/daughter team brings a unique twist of intergenerational concepts and ideas to the Arts Alliance program. Mr. Unzueta is an international artist who has used Chicano and Mexican views to celebrate the

union of these cultures within the American landscape. Annette Unzueta is a college student who has studied under her father since childhood. Her post-modern ideas along with her father's legacy have made this project at Bohnett Park a major asset for the Westside community. Youth artists included Thomas Zepeda, Danny Meza, Miguel Rodriguez, Luis Nájera, Jose Zambrano, Ana Medina, Stefani Ramirez, Marina Coronado, Alondra Mendoza, Diana Santos, Mónica Palomo, Leslie Vega, Stacey Oliva, Cheyenne Valencia, Angie Arriaza, Vanessa Gonzalez, Armando Castillo, Bryan Guerra, Will Castro, Juanita Torres, Vanessa Ponce, and Jonathan Hernandez.

The Santa Barbara Arts Alliance is a free art-based after school mentoring program run by the City's Parks and Recreation Department that provides leadership and life skills development opportunities through hands-on community service projects that focus on neighborhood cleanups and graffiti abatement activities. The program curricula includes art workshops, field trips, community service projects, graffiti abatement and includes the creation and installation of a public mural as part of the youths' ongoing efforts at reducing graffiti vandalism.

The City Parks and Recreation Department would like to recognize the generosity of four funders who have completely underwritten the program this year. Special thanks to the Orfalea Fund, the Community Development Human Services Committee, the Santa Barbara Foundation, and the Santa Barbara County Arts Commission for a Community Arts Grant using funds provided by the City of Santa Barbara in partnership with the Arts Commission. In addition, thanks to the United Way of Santa Barbara and the La Cumbre Junior High School Foundation whose donations helped to fund a portion of the mural project at Bohnett Park.

Following the mural dedication, a second ribbon cutting event will recognize the contributions of La Cumbre Junior High School Foundation and United Way of Santa Barbara County and its partners the City of Santa Barbara Parks and Recreation Department, True Radius Bending, Upright Sports, Smardan-Hatcher Company Plumbing Supplies, and Granite Construction for responding to the need to resurface (recoat) and paint the basketball and handball court at the park, as well as the installation of new basketball poles, backboards and rims.

The basketball and handball courts at Bohnett Park had deteriorated and had become an eyesore for the neighborhood. Backboards were being held together with duct tape, court lines were obliterated and weeds were growing through the cracks of the blacktop court.

This area of the Westside Community was short both of play and recreation structures and a facility that was inviting to the Boys and Girls Club members and the surrounding neighborhood residents. Now no longer a blight on the Westside, La Cumbre Junior High School Foundation and United Way of Santa Barbara County believe that this kind of partnership of connecting agencies and businesses is an example of acting in a collaborative way to enhance the quality of life for neighborhoods.

Residents and the media are cordially invited to attend this celebratory ribbon cutting event to recognize the contributions of La Cumbre Junior High School Foundation and United Way of Santa Barbara County and its partners in making Bohnett Park more user friendly for Westside Boys and Girls Club participants and Westside Neighborhood families.

La Cumbre Junior High School Foundation and United Way of Santa Barbara County look forward to working with others in a collaborative way in the future to continue with improvements in neighborhoods on the Greater Westside.

For more information, please contact Mark Alvarado, Neighborhood and Outreach Services Supervisor, City of Santa Barbara at 897-2560 or Paul Didier, President, La Cumbre Jr. High School Foundation and President, United Way at 965-8591 or Cliff Lambert, Fundraising Chair, La Cumbre Jr. High School Foundation at 921-3005.

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